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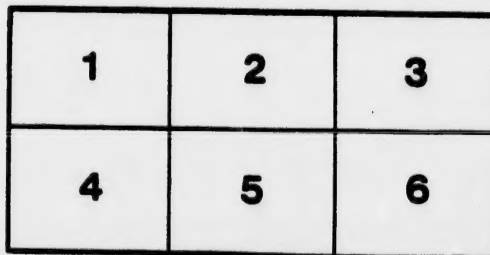
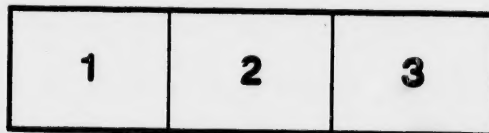
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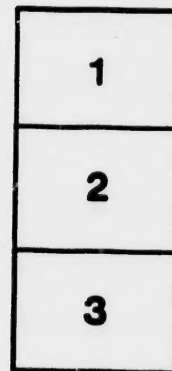
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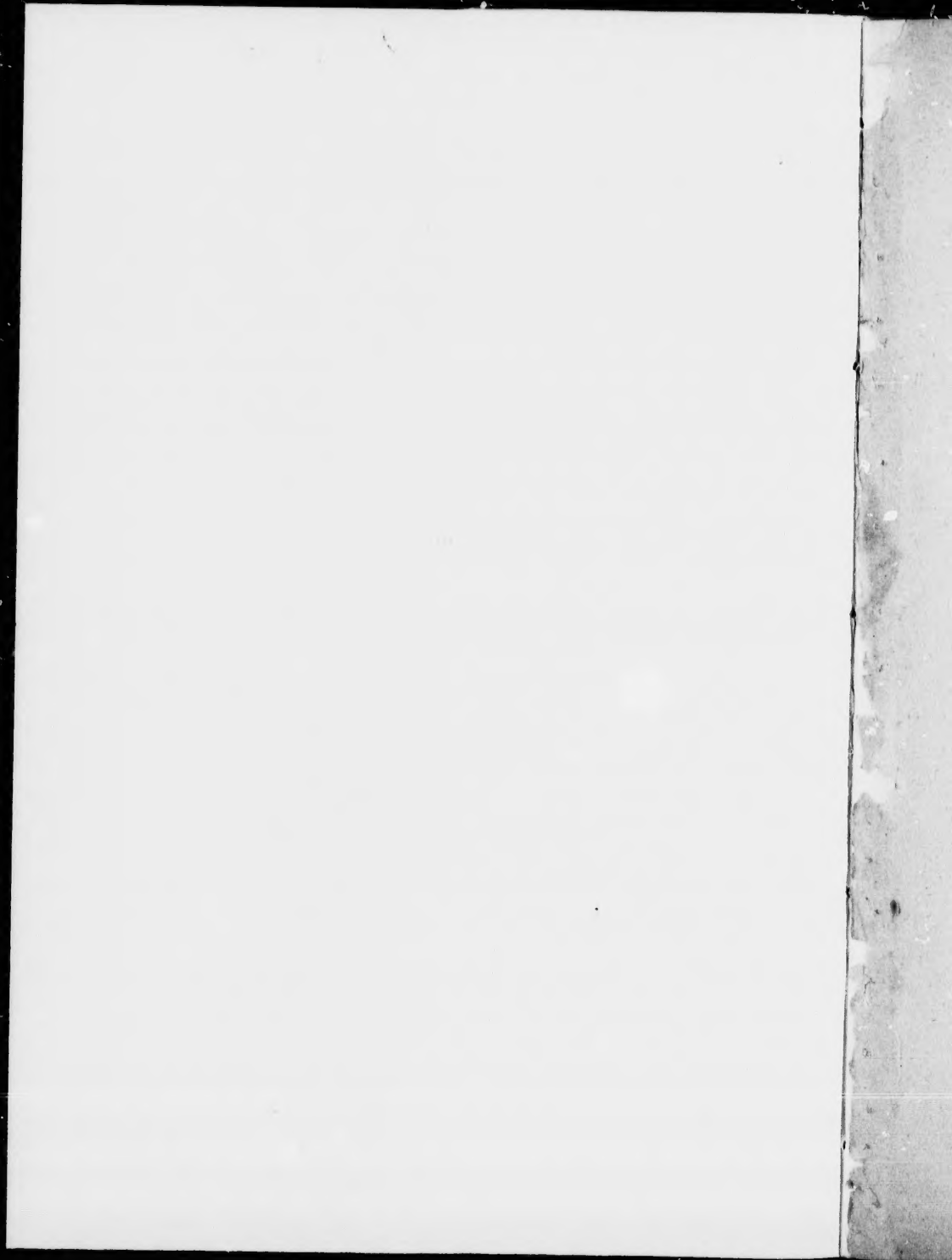
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A SERMON

PREACHED IN

Christ Church Cathedral,

ON

CHRISTMAS MORNING, 1869 ;

BY THE

MOST REVEREND THE LORD BISHOP OF MONTREAL AND
METROPOLITAN OF CANADA.

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SERMON.

REV. xxii. 16.

"I am the root, and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star."

Who is it that is speaking here? Who is it that describes himself in this passage, as both "the root" and also "the offspring" of David?

Some one may, perhaps, be ready to ask, How can this be? How is it possible that the same person can be the parent and the offspring—the root and the branch?

Jesse, who was David's father, might fairly have been called his "root." And Solomon, or any other of his descendants, might have been called his branch or "offspring." But where shall we discover the person who could truly say of himself, that he was both the root and the branch? There is but one Person who has ever lived that could take this title to himself; namely, that mysterious Messenger of mercy, who did on this happy day come and visit our fallen world.

Let us first look at Him as "the Root of David"—David's Creator—David's Lord. He who was born at Bethlehem, and passed thirty years in this suffering world, was the Mighty God Himself, "Immanuel, God with us."

Our knowledge of Christ will be poor indeed, if we know him not as our God. Our trust in Him will be but feeble, if we feel not that His arms are everlasting, and His strength almighty; and therefore that He has power to save. It is of immense importance to see your way clearly on this point. Believe me, you will enjoy no settled peace in your soul, until your heart welcomes the Saviour in all the greatness of His Godhead.

O that God may pluck up every root of unbelief within us! O that He may give us a strong faith; and enable us to see that that Saviour, on whom all our hopes depend, is to each one of us what He was to Thomas, his Lord and his God!

Having thus spoken of Jesus as "the root" of David—as David's maker—let us now see in what way He calls himself his "offspring."

It was foretold many hundred years before our Lord's coming, that He should be born of the seed of Abraham, and of the family of David. Isaiah plainly declares this in ch. ii. In v. 1, he says, "There shall come forth a rod out of *the stem of Jesse*, and a branch shall grow out of his roots; and the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him." And when Jesus was born into this world, and appeared among us in the likeness of our nature, He chose the Virgin Mary as His mother, who belonged to the family and lineage of David. Thus we find Zacharias, just before our Lord's birth, filled with the Holy Ghost, and prophesying in these words: "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

who hath visited and redeemed his people, and hath raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of *his servant David*, as he spake by the mouth of his holy prophets." And thus, too, in the passage before us, our Lord Himself sets His seal, as it were, to the truth of what had been spoken concerning Him, and declares, "I am the root and offspring of David."

Having now explained these words, I pass on to the latter part of the text, which I wish to dwell upon more particularly. Jesus adds, "I am the bright and morning star."

We all know that there is a star in the sky which is commonly called the Morning Star, because it ushers in the dawn of day, and is seen just as the morning breaks. And is not this star a welcome object to the eye, after a long and dreary night? Do we not behold it with pleasure and delight?

Now, for four thousand years the world existed without a Saviour. Men were saved *then* as they are *now*, by faith in Christ: they looked forward to the Saviour who was to come. But He had not yet appeared. These four thousand years may well be called the night of the world's history. It was a time of darkness. Men saw but dimly; but the coming Light was often spoken of. Balaam, for instance, called attention to it, 1400 years before it shone forth. "I shall see Him (he says) but not now: I shall behold Him, but not nigh: there shall come a star

out of Jacob, and a sceptre shall rise out of Israel." Isaiah, too, 700 years later, speaks of that same glorious Light which was to illuminate a dark world. In chapter ix he writes, "The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined." And again, in chapter lx, he calls upon the Jews to rejoice in the prospect of this great Light shedding its rays upon them; "Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, the darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee."

At length the promised Saviour appeared. One morning in December, some shepherds were seen hurrying into the town of Bethlehem, and making their way to a small inn in the place. They were serious men, on a serious errand. In the stable of that inn lay the mighty Saviour of the world—God, in the likeness of man, yea, of a little child, in all the weakness and lowliness of our nature. These shepherds had been directed there by some angels who had appeared to them, and who had just brought them the good news of the Saviour's birth.

Then indeed was the dawn of a bright and glorious day to the Church of God. Well might those angels sing aloud, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men." Well might Zacharias exclaim with holy

joy, "Though the tender mercy of our God the day-spring from on high hath visited us, to give light to them that sit in darkness." And well might that happy song of praise burst forth from the mouth of Simeon, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation—a light to lighten the Gentiles." Our Lord, too, said concerning Himself, "I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness."

It is a pleasant thing for the natural eye to look upon the sun. But still more blessed is it spiritually to see and enjoy the light; to look up with the eye of faith, and behold Christ "the brightness of his Father's glory."

Such is *our* great privilege. Light is come into the world; and though many nations are still sitting in darkness, on us God's light has shone. We have heard of a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. We can read of Him on the page of Scripture. His name and His salvation are published from every pulpit. That name, so precious to every weary soul, is echoed from church to church. And on this joyful and blessed day we are specially called together to meditate on that wondrous birth at Bethlehem, and to praise God with one heart and one mouth for His unspeakable gift.

But although the day has dawned, and the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth, what of that? Are you and I the better for it? This

is a very solemn question. Are we the better for the Saviour having come? What is light? It is a blessing; but not to the blind. And what is Christ? A Saviour; but not to the unbelieving, the wordly, and the wicked.

Let us spend a few moments in looking into this matter.

What is Christ, I ask, to the wicked? There are some who love their sins. They are held in bondage by them. They live from morning till night, and from week's end to week's end, without, perhaps, ever thinking of God. Prayer never goes up from their lips. They revile God's people, and they would keep others, if they could, from loving and serving Christ.

What must the Saviour be to such? Surely they can see no beauty in Him. His loveliness is all hidden from them. The God of this world hath blinded their eyes, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ shall shine unto them.

It would have been better for them that Christ had never come on His errand of mercy; better for them that no minister had ever sounded the tidings of salvation in their ears; better for them that they had lived all their days in a dark heathen land, than in the midst of gospel light. For great indeed is their condemnation, if with light all around them, no blessing has come to their souls. Their case is like that of Herod and Pontius Pilate, before whom the Saviour stood face

to face; but they had no eyes to see Him, and no faith to believe on Him.

But others there are who do not so deliberately thrust away the light from them; but still they do not love it. They disapprove of sin. When they come to Church, they like to hear the truth preached. They believe that Christ is a great blessing to the world. They see that there is no other hope. But yet their religion is all on the surface. It does not come home to them. It does not get into their hearts. It does not warm them. It does not move them. It does not quicken them. They cannot say, "Religion comforts me; it gives a spring to all I do; it is what I am living for." No, they have never felt its power.

And what is Christ to such? What is salvation to them? It is a mere notion floating in their heads, a mere idea received into their minds, and nothing more. There is no saving work upon their souls. I believe there are hundreds and thousands who feel all this, but come short of that one thing which concerns them most of all; namely, being saved by Christ—actually saved by Him. They know something about Him. They hear of Him. But there they stop. They have never gone to Him with a broken and contrite heart, and said, "Lord save me, or I perish."

My dear brethren, would that we had accepted Christ with all our souls! How earnestly I long to see every one of you in that state, that you would throw open your hearts, and welcome Him!

I long to see you all humble, happy followers of the Saviour. Then would Christmas awaken new feelings in your hearts. Then would you look up from this dark world, and feel that there is a light above you, beyond the brightness of the sun, a light that lightens you, that cheers, and blesses, and gives life to your soul. You would rejoice in Christ, as "the bright and morning star."

One can fancy a traveller pursuing his journey through the darkness of some dreary night, groping his way, as best he can, and toiling on amidst a thousand dangers. At one moment he loses the beaten track, and then with difficulty recovers it. How slowly the hours pass—those hours of risk and alarm! And how he longs to be once more in safety! At length the bright and morning star shews itself in the distance, and the early dawn appears. Oh, how great is his joy, for he knows that the danger in his wanderings is past, that his path is now plain, that the welcome daylight is breaking in upon him!

Such is the Christian's joy in looking upon Christ, who is his "sun and his shield." "Unto you therefore which believe he is precious." Many wonder that we can think and talk so much about the Saviour. Why, He is everything to us, our joy, our hope, our support. If the sun could be blotted out of the firmament, would not this be a poor, dull world to live in? And if you were to take Christ from the page of Scripture,

all would be darkness and dreariness indeed to the Christian. *Then* might we well hang down our heads; but *now* we will lift them up and rejoice, looking to the bright and morning star, as we journey on; and longing for that day when we shall reach our heavenly mansion above, which hath "no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it; for the glory of God shall lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."

My dear brethren, I wish you much happiness at this blessed season. I love to think of it as the happiest season of the year. It *ought* to be so.

This shall be my prayer for you; that He who is love itself, may pour out a spirit of love upon you; that "all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, may be put away from you, with all malice; and that ye be kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God, for Christ's sake, hath forgiven you;" that all party feeling and contention may from this day cease; that our hearts may be filled with gentleness and peace, and that our lips may utter only words of Christian kindness and affection. Above all, may Christ, who on this day came into the world, come into all our hearts, and dwell within us, as our Friend and Portion for ever!